OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

Song for the Little Folks.

Jesus said, of little children,
"Let them all now come to Me."
On the cruel cross He suffered,
Shed His blood to set them free.

Hear His gentle voice now saying:
"I will take your sins away;
Come to Me with all your sorrow;
I will hear you when you pray."

Far away, in heathen countries,
Bowing down to wood and stone,
Little children know not Jesus,
That He saves, and He alone.

But he died for those poor children,
When he died for you and me,
Let us send the Gospel to them,
That they, too, His own may be.

—*Selected.*

Dear Editor:—This is my first attempt to write for the EVANGELIST. I am a little girl ten years old. I go to school five months in the winter. I love to go. I go to Sunday school in summer and enjoy it very much. My teacher's name is Mrs. Sallie Rippito. My lesson for today was about Satan tempting Jesus. Little boys and girls let us try to be like Jesus and resist the devil, when he trys to tempt us. I love to read the Children's Column very much. I think some of the little children write such nice letters to the paper. I have three sisters and three brothers. My oldest sister is married and has moved to Kansas. She left here the 22nd of Feb. and I have not seen her since. It seems a long time. She does not like it very well there, and is talking about coming back. I hope she will. As I do not wish to worry any of the little readers, I will close. Perhaps I will write again if I see this in print. So good by little readers. Your little friend,

BERTHA V. HARTMAN.

Scott's Ford, Va.

Dear Editor:—I will write my fourth letter for July, about Samson's riddle. And Samson took for his wife a Philistine woman from Timnath. Samson made a riddle. On his trip to Timnath to see the Philistine woman. He met a lion in the way. He killed it with his own hands, for he had no weapon. The Lord gave him the strength to do it. So he was called the strongest man. The third time he went to Timnath he went to marry the woman. He saw the carcass of the lion in the way and the bees had made honey in it. From this he made the riddle and it was this, "Out of the eater came forth meat and out of the strong came forth sweetness." It meant out of this strong lion which he killed he had taken of the honey which he ate. He gave this riddle to thirty of the Philistines to guess till the marriage day. I hope that J. D. McFaden will be pleased with my letters. I wrote them in reply to his offer for the Pilgrims Progress.

JASON A. G. STIFLER.

Dear Editor:—This is my first attempt to write for the paper. I am ten years old, and I go to Sunday school most every Sunday. We have a nice S. S. and church. We have five classes. Mr. Doty is superintendent and conducts the Bible class. Mrs. Beer teaches the Intermediate class, Mr. Moss teaches the Welsh class, my ma teaches the Infant class, Mrs. Perret is my teacher. She teaches the little girls class. All of us little girls are very sorry for Mrs. Perret and family are going to leave us and go to Los Angeles. My pa, ma and sister are members of the Brethren church and take the EVANGELIST, and I like to read the letters of other little girls. We were all very sorry to hear that our old uncle George Wolf was dead. We shall not see him any more at our camp meeting. I will close now.

BESSIE SHANKS.

Altamont, Cal.

Dear Editor:—I will try and write a letter for the Children's Column. I am eleven years old. My ma has been dead seven years, and I live with my grandpa May's Aleppo, Pa I have one sister. and two brothers dead and one sister living. She is fourteen years old, and lives with my pa who is married again. I have been here visiting with them eleven weeks. Ma takes the EVANGELIST. She belongs to the Brethren church. I helped my sister pick 21 quarts of blackberries. My ma writes sometimes for the paper. I will send it with her letter. I will close for this time. Good by,

IDA SNYDER.

Glover,s Gap, W. Va.

Sketch of the Order Founded by Conrad Beissel and the Pending Lawsuit.

[Chambersburg (Pa.) Special Cor. Pittsburg Commercial-Gazette.]

The preliminary proceedings in a suit for ejectment have been commenced in the Courts of Franklin County, which will probably be the last chapter in the history of one of the most singular religious societies ever formed in this country—a history having its beginning in 1719. In that year the mother Church of a sect calling itself First Day Baptists, or Dunkers, owing to persecutions in the various European countries, where it had from time to time sought refuge since the year 1708, when it was founded by Alexander Mack and seven others in Schwardzenam, Germany, emigrated to America. The greater part of the Dunker emigrants settled in Lancaster County, this state. Among them was a German named Conrad Beissel. He had been a Presbyterian, but became a convert to the doctrine of the Dunkers. In the course of his investigation of the Scriptures after the establishment of a First Day Baptist Church at Muelbach, or Mill Creek, Lancaster County, Beissel became convinced that there was an error in the Dunker acceptance of the day that should be the Lord's Day, and announced that it should be the seventh day. This led to much discussion, and many of the society at Mill Creek accepted the Beissel construction of the Bible on that point. In 1725 he published a pamphlet setting forth his reasons for his belief. The pamphlet called down on his head the strong disapproval of the heads of the First Day Baptist Society, and Beissel disappeared.

No trace of him could be found for more than a year, and then he was discovered by accident by one of his disciples living in a contracted cave or cell on the banks of the Cocalico Creek. The cell had previously been occupied by an aged hermit named Elimelech, who had died.

THE SOCIETY FORMED.

Immediately following the discovery of Beissel his followers left the Mill Creek society and settled about his cave living in solitary cottages, in imitation of the solitary life of their apostle. They formed a church, the doctrines of which were similar to that of the society they had left, except that they adopted the seventh day as their Sabbath. Beissel also went further, and urged, but did not enforce, a life of celibacy on his followers.

He formed what was known as the "Society of the Solitary," and in 1733 a conventual life was adopted by those who chose to take a vow of celibacy and become members of that society, a monastery having in the mean time been erected. The garb of the Capuchin or White Friars was adopted by both the brethren and sisters who entered the convent. Monastic names were given to all who chose the cloister, Beissel becoming Friedsam Gottrecht, or Peaceable God-right. The place where this peculiar society obtained its foothold was called Ephrata. The convent was erected on a hill called Mount Zion. Subsequently other buildings were erected as the needs and new features of the society demanded them. Like the First Day Baptists, they recognized the strict and literal interpretation of the Bible as the only rule of faith, administered apostolic baptism, with trine immersion and the laying on of hands and prayer while the recipient still kneeled in the water, and celebrated the Lord's Supper at night after the close of the Sabbath, which was at sunset on the seventh day, at which supper they washed one another's feet, as the orthodox Dunkers do still. While preaching celibacy as a virtue. they did not prohibit marriage.

The convent life of Beissel's followers who chose the Society of the Solitary was of the severest kind. The cells were but twenty inches wide and the ceilings but five feet high. A bench and a billet of wood for the head was the couch of the inmate of one of these cells. The passages that led through the convent were so narrow that two could not pass in them. The fare of the inmates was fruit and vegetables. They ate from wooden plates and drank from wooden goblets. In 1740 there were forty-five members of this Society of the Solitary.

A THRIVING SETTLEMENT.

The secular branch of Beissel's Dunkers had one of the most thriving settlements at that time in the country. They owned a paper-mill, a grist-mill, oil-mill and fulling-mill. They established a printing office, the second outside of Philadelphia, in the State. In this office were printed many books, pamphlets, tracts and hymns. The work on these books, both as to printing and binding, was superior. Among the rarest treasures in the State Library at Harrisburg are specimens of these quaint old German publications.

In 1768 Conrad Beissel died. The society fell into the control of men who had not his disinterested piety, and in 1777 it began to decline. In a few years jealousies and schemes arose. Leading men in this society left it with strong followings and founded similar churches elsewhere, and soon the Society of Ephrata was no more. Among those who left Ephrata was Andrew Schneeberger. With a good share of the parent society he came to Franklin County in the latter part of the last century. He purchased a fine property on Snow Hill in Quincy Township, where he erected a large convent, a church and other buildings. He was not a member of the Society of the Solitary himself, but he was the Prior of the new church, which kept closely to the principles of the Ephrata Society.

The Snow Hill Society became the head of all the Beisselite Dunkers, and the nunnery, as it came to be called, was nearly filled with those adherents of Beissel who accepted fully his views on celibacy. The secular branch was large and prosperous. They called themselves Seventh Day Baptists, and the affairs of both the secular and monastic branches were controlled by the Prior. All the land and the buildings belonged to the Prior, who had eight children. In 1823 he made each of his children an offer of $1,000 if they would release all claim they had at law against his estate. This offer was accepted. In 1825 he transferred the property to five Trustees, to be held in trust for the society forever. Schneeberger died soon afterward, and the monastic branch of the society soon began to decline. The inmates grew old and died.

None of the younger members of the society seemed inclined to take on them vows of celibacy. Now and then the nunnery would receive a new inmate from the older members of the society, but even the aged preferred the privilege of the secular branch to the severe restrictions of the Solitary.

THE ONLY LIVING MEMBERS.

To-day the only living members of Conrad Beissel's Society of the Solitary, formed in 1753, are three old and decrepit people—Obed Snowberger, Mrs. Elizabeth Ritter and Miss Elizabeth Fyock. Snowberger and Miss Fyock are descendants of Schneeberger, the name having been changed to Snowberger after the latter's death. They have been in the cloister upward of half a century. Mrs. Ritter is a widow, and took the monastic vows over thirty years ago.

The writ of ejectment suit to recover possession of the nunnery property is brought by fifty heirs of Andrew Schneeberger, who base their claim on the ground that Schneeberger's transfer of the property to the trustees of the society was intended only for the use of the monastic branch, and, holding that the monastic is in reality extinct, consequently the property reverts to the legal heirs of Andrew Schneeberger. The trustees defend this suit, and, while denying that the transfer was for the benefit of the Society of the Solitary alone, hold that if such shall prove to be the case, the transfer is still valid, as the society still exists in the persons of Obed Snowberger, Elizabeth Ritter and Elizabeth Fyock.

The property in dispute has grown to be valuable, being worth to-day between $40,000 and $50,000. The best counsel has been engaged by both sides, and the chances are that the last vestige of Conrad Beissel's Society of the Solitary will disappear in lawyer's fees.